The Daily Green Mountain Freeman.

VOLUME III. MONTPELIER, VERMONT. SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3, 1863. NUMBER 760

Miscellany.

A Soldier's Letter.—No. 41.

CAMP NEAR CULPEPPER COURT HOUSE, Va., Sept. 25th, 1863.

EDITOR FREEMAN:—We are once more back again with the Army of the Potomac in our accustomed place, and doing our accustomed duties. Our recall from New York was rather sudden and unexpected. The draft to be sure had been accomplished, but the men had not been taken away, and then was when the trouble might be expected if the draft was to be resisted at all. Our services would then be needed if ever. But the order came for us to return. Meade was contemplating an advance, and no doubt felt keenly the weakness of his army while we were away. The rebels were sending away troops to swallow Rosecrans and now was the golden moment to strike for Richmond. But what could the Army of the Potomac do without its Vermont brigade? We saved it from destruction in one campaign, and Gen. Meade is not so fool-hardy as to risk another while his main dependence was absent. So in all haste we were re-called to the army, leaving our dear friends, the copperheads, to work out their own destruction. Well, we are here, but I fear the golden moment is lost. The celebrated "eight day's ration" order is in full force and we are liable to move at any time. We may be ordered on towards Richmond and then—Heaven save the mark—may have to skedaddle back again. Our wide awake foes will have whipped the Tennessee army and be back here ready to whip us before we are half prepared for our punishment. It would be no more than we deserve for our proverbial remissness. Should it turn out so, the North ought to sit in sackcloth and ashes and count it an honor to kiss the dust from Jeff Davis' feet. They ought to be excluded forever from the family of nations as unworthy the sacred trust. The poorest scholar can't help seeing that if the North would only rise now like a lion conscious of his strength we might smash the Confederacy all to atoms in a very short time. But instead of that the North hangs back, only doling out a few miserable conscripts, or substitutes rather, now and then when they can't help it, who are more trouble to us than they are worth, and whose courage consists chiefly in daring to desert. The rebels themselves shame us, and compel our very respect by their dogged perseverance. They can call every man into the army, and it does not seem to require a large portion of their army to enforce their conscription. They work to win; we work because we are obliged to. It is more respectable to be a live worker on the wrong side, than a drone on the right side. But we have not andvanced yet, so of course we are safe at present, and while we are awaiting orders I will give a brief account, in my homely way, of our journey here from New York.

We left Poughkeepsie Sunday, the 13th inst., at noon, in the Knickerbocker, and stopped that night in New York harbor. We were transferred from the Knickerbocker to another steamboat whose name I have forgotten, which took us the next day to South Amboy, on the Jersey coast, some thirty miles from New York city. At this latter place we got aboard the cars and came by railroad to Washington. The latest style of soldiers' are simply freight cars with boards propped up for seats. For windows, we had the benefit of two side doors to begin with, but long before our journey was concluded we had plenty of ventilation, owing principally to the energetic use of the butt end of somebody's gun-stock on the boards at different places on the sides of the car. Each car was filled as full it would hold of men, knapsacks and rations, huddled in together promiscuously. It took a shrewd genius to identify himself in that place.

It was near midnight when we got to Philadelphia. At the Cooper Shop Volunteer Refreshment Saloon we found a glorious supper ready prepared expressly for us. Bread of an excellent quality, outter and cheese, pickles, hot coffee, and all that a hungry soldier need ask. It was not soldiers' living at all: it was good enough for a first class hotel. This is the first place of the kind that has been opened since the war broke out, and I doubt if any more modern, can surpass it. It came just in time, for we were both tired and hungry, and we could not possibly compose ourselves to hard-tack and pork so soon after leaving Poughkeepsie, and this was all that was provided us. We had fasted with wonderful patience till then. I imagine the proprietors of that Shop have no insignificant ideas of our capacity to dispose of good food when we can get it. Supper over, we formed into line again outside, where we had stacked our guns, and giving three hearty cheers for our reception, we started on our way through the city to take another train. Here we were packed into the cars again as before. There was every shade of difference between that and a regular sleeping car, but notwithstanding that, I slept most soundly there till morning. I might have slept there till this time, for ought I know, if my next neighbor had not accidentally put his boot into my face, which made sleeping so uncomfortble that I concluded to wake up. Almost all the boys in that car slept as soundly as I did. I have read of travelers who were prone to regard sleeping cars as a failure, saying that it was impossible for one to compose himself to slumber while he was being rattled over the the road at ocomotive speed. I wish such a man could have looked into that car about three o'clock that morning; he would have seen his argument floored most effectually. There the boys lay in all shapes maginable, and a great many shapes that no one would think of imagining; some on the seats and some under them, some lying down and some sitting up, and some in all manner of posittons from a horizontal to a perpendicular, with their knapsacks, equipments, guns or boots for a bed or pillow. The train vibrated along over the rough road, and occasionally shake one out of his position, but still the boys snored on in blissful unconsciousness. The rocking of the car was only a lullaby that wooed them to a sounder sleep. As we were an extra train, we had to wait for every other train and go the swifter when the time was ours. The consequence was that our progress was slow, and daylight overtook us before we reached Havre de Grace. At this place the whole train, engine and all, was ferried across the bay. There is a bridge to be constructed here, and its foundation is being laid, but it is as yet in its infancy. At this place we stopped long enough to buy us a breakfast all around at the groceries near by. It is curious how quickly the prices of eatables advance in a small place at the advent of a regiment of soldiers. The moment we stopped I stepped into a bakery and bought a loaf of bread for five cents. Handing this to a friend, I returned to the same place and found bread selling rapidly at two loaves for fifteen cents. A few minutes later and the price was ten cents a loaf, and still going up. The price of cheese went up to 25 cents a pound, and that of butter was more than doubled. I hope the people had their shopping done for that day before we got there. All at once the whistle sounded and the train started. More than half of the boys were off the train, and for a few minutes there was a nimble scampering from all points converging upon the moving train, and making all possible haste to get aboard.—Freight cars are not the prettiest of vehicles to get on to when in motion, and had one fallen and broken his neck on that occason, no trial short of a court martial could have made him out a criminal. At half-past eleven we entered the city of Baltimore. We made a stop of about a hour which gave us a chance to eat dinner and all the watermelon we wanted, when we were put aboard another train and started towards Washington. This train was crowded to overflowing inside and on the top. Before, all had been kept inside. The officer of the day peremptorily ordered one of us who had climbed to the top to enjoy the cool breeze and fine prospect, to get down from the cars and ride inside. Now the top of the cars were covered, and the same officer of the day never noticed us. Military necessity they said made the difference. Some of the boys persisted in seeing it in another light. They said it was for their convenience then to ride on the outside but the officer of the day forbade it; now it was for his convenience to have us outside, and he made us ride there. Circumstances are quite apt to alter cases.

It was after nine o'clock when we got to Washington, and an hour later before we got straightened around so as to know where we belonged. We went into the Soldiers' Retreat and took our supper, and then were marched to the barracks. Our fare at the Retreat, was far below the Poughkeepsie or Philadelphia standard, and some of the boys who had eat their fill of dainties along the way, considered themselves abased because their appetite failed them on this occasion. I remember a time, when a meal there was a rare luxury. There was no disturbance, however, owing partly to Colonel Walbridge's presence, and that of other officers. The Colonel told the boys, that the bread was good and the meat was good, but if we did not want it we could let it alone—a common sense deduction truly. His firmness prevented any disgrace.

The next day we went over to Alexandria, and Friday we started for the army. We had to march the whole distance, and escort a long train for the army's use from Alexandria. The day we started the rain poured in torrents. I have seldom seen it rain harder. It seemed as if the windows of heaven were opened, and doors too. It was rather of a rough introduction to the war again. Some of the boys had scarcely a dry thread in their clothes, but they were all full of fun and frolic, and never seemed to enjoy themselves better. "How are you New York, and how are you Poughkeepsie;" the contrast was so great that it was considered a joke and laughed at accordingly. It takes more than one equinoctial storm to sober such a brigade as the First Vermont. We didn't make a very long march that day; it was impossible. We haulted before we got to Fairfax, put up our tents, built us fires, and made ourselves as comortable as possible. Some of the boys took off their clothes, gave them a thorough wringing, then put them on again to dry. In this process they were assisted by a keen northwest wind, for it had stopped raining, and the wind had shifted to that cold quarter. The next day we made the distance to Centreville, and Sunday we proceeded on to Catlett's Station. At all these places along the Railroad, a large guard is left to protect the road from guerrilla depredations. The Eleventh Corps has this comparatively easy duty, by virtue of their being such excellent skedaddlers in time of battle. Our boys were cruel in their jokes on these fellows, and take every occasion to let them know that there peculiarities are appreciated. One of them happened to be walking very rapidly in a direction contrary to ours. "Is there a battle going on in front?" asked one of our boys of him with great apparent sincerity and earnestness. Not that he knew of, he replied. "What in h–l is your hurry" was the rejoinder. On another occasion, which I shall poorly describe, a group of their men and ours were talking together and laughing quite loud, when one of the boys mildly recomemded, that we should be cautious and calm in our conversation, for in case of too loud talk or excitement, we might "get the Seventh Corps to running." The occasion and the peculiar drollery of the expression are indescribable, and the victims themselves were obliged to laugh. They bore our joking with remarkably good humor.

Monday night we pitched our tents on the rebel soil of the Rappahannock. Tuesday we finished our journey, and from the length of my letter, I think it high time that that was finished too.

ANTI REBEL.

Correspondence of The Freeman.

Chicago.

CHICAGO, Sept. 18, 1863.

Chicago is a great town. Great in quantity and great in quality, great in commerce and great in wealth, great in growth and great in prosperity, rich in resources and rich in mud, blessed with plenty of eatables and drinkables, especially drinkables, and more than plenty of mosquitoes and fleas. The mosquitoes are regarded as a sort of godsend, however, as it is thought that they absorb and neutralize the miasmatic elements arising from stagnant water, which would otherwise be much more destructive to the human organism. I conversed with a physician on the subject who remarked, O, yes, the mosquitoes are our only salvation." Perhaps his remark was true, but, if so, the people are saved as narrowly as Job was when he had "escaped with the skin of his teeth."

One of the most noticeable features of this city, and the most striking, especially in a dark night when you get too far from a street lamp, is the manner of constructing sidewalks. It is well known that Chicago is built on a low, marshy ground, as level as the plains of Babylon. In fact, from the dome of the court house, which stands near the center of the town, there is not the slightest apparent unevenness in the surface within the range of vision. And yet in walking a half mile, not less than three miles within the city limits, I ascended and descended steps enough to have taken me to the top of Bunker Hill Monument and back again. If the steps had all been upward and none downward, at the end of a mile I would have been "higher 'n a kite," or higher than Camel's Hump. It seems that each man builds the walk by his own premises; and if an enterprising genius can afford to build a higher mansion than his heighbors, commencing his basement on a level with other people's doors, he carries the sidewalk up to his first floor by steps, and the unfortunate pedestrian who saunters along the street, is obliged to clamber over the ground story of the rascally nabob's house. It is not so in the business part of the city, however, the streets and walks being graded and wel paved with stone.

The water is villainously bad—worse, I think, than in most parts of the West. A friend of mine who came here in July from Massachasetts, remarked that matters were improving here, as the people had got in the habit of drinking ale and lager beer instead of the bad whiskey and worse water that they were obliged to drink before lager came in fashion. I should think an "improvement" was making in that direction if there is anything in signs, as most of the signs over the shop doors have ale or beer on them. The city is making an effort now to obtain better water a and they have a project on foot for constructing; tunnel into the lake a couple of miles to obtain water from thence. I believe a Pennsylvania firm has taken the contract to make the tunnel, the work to be completed in two years. So a dry sucker, living in Chicago, has a reasonable prospect, by waiting a couple of years, of obtaining a tolerable drink.

Chicago is made glad just now by the presence of numbers of Kentuckians who come on daily in squads, having friends among the rebel prisoners at Camp Douglas, whom they "want to get to see." It is a little difficult to "get to see' them, however, though they generally succeed after a while, in getting a pass from Gen. Burnside or the Brigadier General commanding at Springfield. The citizens here cannot get inside the camp without a pass—and can get no pass without some plausible reasons for asking it. I went to the gate to send in my card to the Colonel commanding the camp, but found the officer on guard duty to be Lieut. Holman of Braintree, of the 9th Vt. Regiment, who very kindly, and without any red tape manœvering, took me inside the camp and showed me around; though he could give me no leave to talk with the prisoners of whom there are about four thousand here, mostly of Morgan's guerrillas. I saw and read several letters which were going to the friends of the prisoners, Lieut. Halman being detailed to examine all correspondence between the captured rebels and their friends, and giving me the privilege of looking them over at pleasure, and gleaning therefrom what information I could. There was very much of a sameness about them, but as a specimen I will give you one entire, showing how Mr. Piper piped away to his sweet "cosen" in Old Kentuck:

CAMP DOUGLAS, Ill., Sept. 13, 1863.

Dear cosen I embrace the present Opertunity of coresponding to you to let you no that I am well Hoping thes- few lines ma find you the same state of helth I dont think I hav eny frends thar or they would Write to me I will rite you a few lines to see if you will answer them, I would be glad to see you and talk of Old times I herd you and Taltan Crane was mared I want to no I want to no what become of permely and if Saly Crandis is mared or not Give mi love to Miss Martin and Canels rite wher you are mared or not kate for Ben is on his head a bout it Tell Mother to send me a blanket and some cloths I dident name in mi other leter tell them to send mi cloths with Abes cloths I want them to send them as soon as they can git them redy for we dont no wen we will be sent a way No more at Present your Cosen B PIPER

Another writes to his "cind frend," exhorting her to remain in maidenhood till the soldiers return from the war: though he says he almost envies the boys who remain at home the "good times" they are having with the girls. But he says it is some consolation to think that he and his comrades will be back sometime, which he thinks will "prove a calamity" to those who are there, and he advises them to "make ha while the sun shines."

Of the 9th Vermont, there are fifteen or twenty left here, the rest having gone into active service again. Those who remain were unable to proceed with the regiment, but I believe are all well or nearly so now.

N. W. G.

Washington County.

Notice is hereby given that application will be made to the next General Assembly of the State of Vermont, for a tax upon said County to raise money to pay the debts and expenses of said County.

Montpelier, Aug. 1, 1863. w3lw3